

THE BRAHMAVÂDIN.

1895

“एकं सत् विभावदुधावदन्ति.”

“That which exists is One: sages call it variously.”—*Rigveda*, I. 164. 46.VOL. I.
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CREATION.

1. Then there was neither entity nor non-entity; there was no world, no sky, nor any thing beyond it. What enveloped all? Where? For whose happiness was it? Was it water, unapproachable and profound?

2. Then death was not, nor immortality. There was no means of distinguishing night and day. That One lived with self-supporting power, breathing without air. There was nothing different from, or above, it.

3. In the beginning there was darkness hidden in darkness; all this was undistinguishable chaos. That which, being everywhere, was wrapped in indistinctness, grew into one by the great power of the austerity of contemplation.

4. At first arose Desire, which is the primal germ of mind. Sages searching with their heart's thought have found the kinship of the existent in the non-existent.

5. Their spreading ray of light, was it across, below, or above? There were impregnating powers, there were mighty forces; the self-supported was below, and the energizer above.

6. Who knows truly, and who can here declare, whence was born, whence, this varied creation? The gods are subsequent to the creation of this universe; who then knows whence it arose?

7. From what this creation arose, whether it was made or not—He whose eye controls this world in the highest heaven, He certainly knows, or perhaps He does not know.—*Rigveda*, X, 129.

This famous hymn of the *Rigveda* clearly shows how the germs of the *Vedânta* are already to be found in the *Veda*. Indeed Sâyana interprets this hymn in his commentary in accordance with the systematised *Advaita-Vedânta* of Sankarâcharya. It is very difficult for us in these days to make out with positive certainty the originally intended meaning of any of our Vedic hymns.

Our sacred literature is extensive. The *Veda* and the *Vedânta* form, however, the fountain-sources from which religious influences have been perennially streaming forth to fertilise the world of man in India. And it is our intention to publish from time to time in our columns translations of typical extracts from Vedic and Vedântic literature, so as to exhibit in a brief compass the successive stages in the development of religious thought in this country.

Notes.

To enable our readers to see how truly catholic our great religious teachers have been we extract below an English version of some of the sayings of Sri Rāmakrishna Paramahansa, the guru of Swami Vivekananda. Through the kindness of Babu Sris Chandra Bose, B.L. District Munsiff of Ghazipur, we are in a position to announce that a translation of the Ukis or sayings of the great Paramahansa will be published in these columns from time to time.

PRECEPTS OF PARAMAHANSA RA'MA-KRISHNA.

1. Like unto a miser that longeth after gold, let thy heart pant after Him.
2. How to get rid of the lower self? The blossom vanishes of itself as the fruit grows so will your lower self vanish as the Divine grows in you.
3. In moonlit nights, you see the sky studded with myriads of stars but they cease to be visible with the rise of the sun. Will you therefore deny that there are stars in the sky even during the day?
4. So long as the heavenly expanse of the heart is troubled and disturbed by the gusts of desire, there is little chance of our beholding therein the luminary God. The beatific godly vision occurs only in the heart which is calm and rapt up in divine communion.
5. So long as the bee is outside the petals of the flower, it buzzes and emits sound. But when it is inside the flower, the sweetness thereof has silenced and overpowered the bee. Forgetful of sounds and of itself, it drinks the nectar in quiet. Man of learning, you too are making a noise in the world, but know the moment you get the slightest enjoyment of the sweetness of Bhakti, you will be like the bee in the flower inebriated with the nectar of Divine Love.
6. The soiled mirror never reflects the rays of the sun, so the impure and the unclean in heart that are subject to Mayā (illusion) never perceive the glory of Bhagavān. But the pure in heart see the Lord as the clear mirror reflects the sun. So be holy.
7. As the cloud screens the sun from our view so does Mayā veil God from our perception. The sun shows itself as the cloud sails away: so Nārāyan reveals himself when the veil of Mayā vanishes away.
8. As on troubled surface of rolling waters, the moon shines in broken images, so on the unsettled mind of a worldly man engrossed in Mayā does shine the perfect God in partial light.
9. As the light of a lamp dispels in a moment the darkness that has reigned for a hundred years in a room, so a single ray of Divine Light from the Throne of Mercy illumines our heart and frees it from the darkness of life-long sins.
10. Why does a Bhakta (one inebriated in the love of God) forsake everything for the sake of God? An insect flies from darkness the moment any light meets its eyes, the ant gives up its life in molasses but never forsakes it. So the Bhakta cleaves unto his God for ever and leaves all else.

We are glad to find that the Parliament of Religious Extension Committee has already begun to work vigorously to hold another Religious Congress. One of the grandest results of the first Parliament of religions held at Chicago was to show that there is truth in every

religion and that no one religion can arrogate to itself the credit of containing the whole truth. If any one religion can be universally acceptable it must be such as to suit all capacities. The only religion which makes the nearest approach to this ideal is, in our opinion, the Vedāntic Religion of India.

Vivekananda A. Chaudhri, the Jain Delegate to the Parliament of Religion has returned to India after doing splendid work in America. One of the chief and by no means the least of his achievements is the interest he has made the Americans take in the education of poor Indian youths. Many American ladies and gentlemen have already promised substantial help. When is it going to work out its own salvation.

A very pious Bairagi recently died at Rameswaram. It is a matter worthy of note that his goodness and purity extorted the admiration of some even of our English-educated visitors to that place of pilgrimage.

SWAMI TRIGUNAVIṬA'NAND, a Saṅgyasi disciple of Paramahansa Ramakrishna, has undertaken a perilous journey over the Himalayas. Having crossed the impenetrable snowy ranges at the height of 21,000 feet, he has entered Tibet from the Nepal side. His object is to see the Sadhus and Mahatmas, who are said to be living in the caves of the Himalayas, and in the neighbourhood of the lake, called Śālinasasarowara. The Swami also intends to penetrate into the mysteries of Lamaism, and to see for himself the convent where the Tibetan record of Christ's life was found.

Swami Bodhananda of Benares has gone down to Calcutta with the object of establishing a Vedic College there. If he can carry out the project which requires a large sum of money, he will remove a long felt want of the city.

Elsewhere in these columns we publish an extract from the *New York Morning Advertiser* in which Swami Vivekananda argues that the annihilation of the soul is impossible. We recommend it to the careful study of our readers.

Commencing with our next issue we mean publishing a translation of Sri Ramanuja's *Vedārtha Sangraha*, a discourse on the Upanishads.

The *Advaita-Siddhi* is intended, as the name indicates, to establish the doctrines of the Advaita Philosophy on the basis of reasoning and of the Hindu Scriptures. We propose to publish in our columns the critical and explanatory summary of the reasoning adopted in that work, as given by Mr. N. Vaidyanatha Aiyar, M. A., of Kumbhakonam, Madhasudana Saraswati, its author, was a native of Northern India and an ascetic. He seems to have lived in the first half of the 17th century, as he has referred in one of his works to Appaya Dikshita who was born in 1587 and died in 1660. Brahmānanda, the author of the standard work on Advaitism known as *Brahmānandīyam*, was one of our author's disciples. He has also written a commentary on the *Dasasloki* of Sri Sankara, named *Siddhanta-Bindu*, a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, named *Gudhartha Dipika*, *Vedānta Kalpa Latika* which is a short essay on the Advaita philosophy, &c., &c. The *Advaita-Siddhi* and *Siddhanta-Bindu* have now been printed for the first time in Nāgarī characters by an enterprising proprietor of the Sri Vidya Press at Kumbhakonam.

The Brahmasādin

SATURDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER 1895.

THE BRAHMAVĀDIN.

Elsewhere in these columns is reprinted the letter sent round on our behalf with the object of obtaining for us advice and assistance in regard to the work we have to-day taken upon ourselves to do. From the replies to that letter as well as from other circumstances, we are led to think that the *Brahmasādin* has to meet a real want more or less vaguely felt in the different parts of our country. How that want will be met by us time alone can shew, and in all humility and earnestness we have resolved to serve the cause of truth according to the light there is in us, and thereby serve the cause of man. We have been advised strongly by many of our well-wishers and supporters in the different parts of India that, to start with, it would be better to bring out the *Brahmasādin* once in every fortnight than once in every week as originally proposed. We are hopeful about its future, in spite of the very responsible and arduous nature of our undertaking.

It has indeed been well said that "religion is the ideal portion of human life"; and, while it is the function of science, poetry, and philosophy to indicate the outline of the growing ideals of human life, it is religion which enables man to take hold of those ideals firmly, and convert them all into a practical working force in society. Europe and America are slowly making out to-day that the ultimate and essential teachings of the *Vedānta* are in complete accordance with the most advanced scientific thought of modern times. Western Science has all along been successfully engaged in finding out the uniform and beautifully ordered design on which the universe rests; and from this position it has been perforce led to seek and know the "Intelligence that pervades the Universe." Poetry in its highest form has had always to embody, with the help of inspiration and its own natural prophetic instinct, in definite shape and concrete form, the ever progressive ideals of beauty and goodness, which, the unsullied and enlightened heart of man conceives, and appreciates with joy and admiration, from time to time. And the best European poetry of this age, from that of the German Goethe downwards, may be seen to be filled to overflowing with Vedāntic visions of truth. Indeed Goethe who was a "scholar in art, in science, and in life" has been characterised as the Spinoza of poetry. Since the days of Kant, German philosophy has been slowly moving on towards the formulation of an ideal of human life, very little, if at all, different from the Vedāntic

ideal. It is said that after the days of Carlyle and his clothes-philosophy even practical England has learnt to appreciate and adopt modern German Metaphysics. Western science, poetry, and philosophy are all thus pointing to-day to what is in many respects very much like the Vedāntic solution of the problem of man and the universe as the one solution which is consistent with the truth of things.

Although Vedāntic wisdom, derived through some channel or other, is already on a fair way to become the guiding light of all mankind, we, the Hindus of this country, are pre-eminently heirs to all its glory. To us historically belongs the credit of having first lit that light, and of having kept it up so long more or less brightly shining, in spite of many unfavourable circumstances. If thus our privilege is great in regard to this matter, we ought to realise that our burden of duty arising therefrom is, in consequence, proportionately great also. To us, therefore, belongs the duty of placing before the world our ancient Vedāntic ideal of life—an ideal so true and so full of promise to humanity even to-day—clothed in language suited to the understanding of modern man. With this object in view the *Brahmasādin* shall always boldly adopt the critical, the comparative, and the historical methods of looking at things in understanding and publishing abroad the truly philosophic development of religion in India. Man's power of apprehending truth has grown with his growth, and criticism and comparison can only add lustre to truth which is of itself luminous. We do not and cannot hold that the whole of our varied and extensive scriptural literature has had, all along, one and only one social, religious, philosophical, and ethical ideal in view. There is ample evidence in that literature itself to shew how this ideal has gradually undergone changes from time to time, and how the *Vedānta* as contained in the Upanishads and the *Bhagavadgītā* gives us the last and the most sublime embodiment thereof. The distinction between the *Karma-mārga*, the *Jñāna-mārga*, and the *Bhakti-mārga* is in the mouth of almost every one who lays any claim to religious culture in this country. All these three paths—the path of works, the path of knowledge, and the path of devotion—intended for the attainment of immortal bliss and the deliverance of the spirit from the bondage of matter did not all come into existence at the same time, and have not all along been co-existent as they are now; and, as surely as there is a historical sequence about them, there is also a difference in the nature of the dispensations which they severally proclaim.

India has never felt it necessary to maintain the truthfulness of her religion with the aid of the altogether irrational divorce of philosophy from religion. There has been no philosophy in India, really worth the name, which has not borne fruit in religion; and, as it has been well remarked by no less an authority than Max Müller, her *Vedānta*, while being the most sublime philosophy,

is also the most satisfying religion. Any religion that has no bearing on human conduct, and does not tend to bring about a progressively harmonious and equitable adjustment of the relations between man and man in the multiform complexity of human social life, is no religion at all; and we are fully convinced that the steady application of the principles of the Vedānta to the practical life of man will not only enable him to obtain for himself an excellent and truly ethical self-culture, but also tend to remove largely the injustices and unnatural inequalities more or less incidental to all forms of social organisations. To preach the Vedānta, or, for the matter of that, to preach any worthy religion at all is to preach the need for self-improvement and social reform.

Our object, however, is not to glorify disobedience and the decay of faith, and we do not mean to build anything at all on what has been called the method of rebellion in matters of social and religious reform. We are not unaware that this method too has its own value, for nothing so well draws the attention of inert, fossilised, unwilling man to social evils and injustices as the spirit of rebellion and its often overwrought, but virtuous, indignation. Rebellion cannot be constructive; it is indeed its nature not to be so. The work of social improvement is nowhere a matter of merely tearing the past to pieces. On the other hand it is everywhere seen to grow out of the old roots in the soil of faith, with the help of the sun-light of new knowledge and truer appreciation of religious and ethical ideals. The age of faith is the age of constructive heroism, only the faith has to be a living and enlightened one. Our immediate aim is to produce such an enlightened and living faith in the religion of the Vedānta; and we have no doubt that, when that is done, social improvement will come of itself in the fulness of time. We have no desire to assume an attitude of opposition to the prevalent forms of religious orthodoxy here or anywhere else, as it is our firm belief that even the blindest and most stubborn orthodoxy can be made both sweet and reasonable by appealing sufficiently long in its own way to its own sense of justice, goodness, and truth. Orthodoxy everywhere naturally objects to be meddled with from outside; but it is certainly worth-while trying whether persistent preaching and persuasion from within will not cause it to expand and grow in time into a generous instrument of freedom and progress and purity. Constructive reforms of all kinds have always to be based on compromise, conciliation, and the spread of enlightenment. No society can be better than the individuals composing it, is a very trite saying; and if, as we believe, a living faith in the religion of the Vedānta is able to elevate and ennoble the individual, the very same means must also prove effective in inducing social improvement.

Mystification and sectarianism are no essential parts of any religion; much less are they so of the religion of the Vedānta. It is a lesson of history that no religion can avoid the schism of

sects, and this lesson has a deep and far-reaching significance to all those who will dispassionately think about it. The whole world can never be truly of one religion, and therefore the honest and conscientious sectary's glowing enthusiasm and firmness of conviction are indeed worthy of all praise, only so long as they do not land him in bigotry and narrowness. But the broad-minded sectary who is willing and ready to pay homage to all forms of man's apprehension of truth is almost, if not quite, an impossibility. The comparative study of religions and religious sects has clearly shown to us that it is too much for any one religion, or any one sect thereof, to lay claim to the possession of the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It is undeniable that there is truth in all religions and all their sects; there is also a fitness in all of them in relation to the persons who severally follow them with honest and intelligent conviction. Therefore with the object of guarding ourselves against narrowness and other allied errors we mean to make the "Open Column" an essential feature of this journal. In the "Open Column" will be published all signed communications having any bearing on the various religious, philosophical, and social topics that the *Brahma-vādin* may, from time to time, discuss, as it is our desire to give free scope and publicity to all honest differences of opinion. Truth is truly like a torch; the more we shake it, the more it shines. The sublime rationality of the Vedānta can allow the roughest handling of it, without the slightest injury to itself; and although it is sometimes spoken of as *Rahasya*, *Gūhya*, as something secret and hidden, it stands in no need of mystic justification. The fiercest light of day may be made to beat upon the Vedānta, and there will not be found a single ugly feature or dark spot exposed to view. The Vedānta-religion is secret and hidden only in the sense that it is other than the plain and patent forms of ritualistic religion and worship, in the sense that it is wholly based upon self-restraint and self-culture—upon each individual realising his God in himself. Not only the kingdom of God but also God Himself is within you. Here is indeed the grandest mystery of all mysteries, and the only one that the religion of the Vedānta ever consciously proclaims. Here we have, moreover, a religion which lights up and throws open God's Universal Temple to all those who have, by self-discipline and self-development, made themselves worthy to enter it. To the blessed person who finds himself within this well-illuminated holy edifice, the rancour of castes and creeds appears to be unlawful and inconsistent with the highest truth, and all his old hates get "alchemised into the gold of love" at once. And then—from within the inner sanctuary thereof he will, we may well imagine, sing forth in the enjoyment of the deepest harmony of the soul, and in language far more sublime than that of the poet,

The All-embracing, All-sustaining One,
Say, doth He not embrace, sustain, include,
Thee? me? Himself? Bends not the sky above?

And earth, on which we are— is it not firm?

And does not All—that is,
Seen and unseen, mysterious All—
Around thee and within,
Untiring agency,
Press on thy heart and mind?
Fill thy whole heart with it—and when thou art
Lost in the consciousness of happiness—
Then call it what thou wilt,
Happiness! heart! Love! God!
I have no name for it!

(Goethe.)

IS THE SOUL IMMORTAL?

THE MORNING ADVERTISER'S GREAT DISCUSSION.

It is the problem of the ages we pick up to-day!
Is man immortal? Who can tell?

Do you believe that the men who jostle you in a Broadway car have immortal souls? That the policeman at the corner has an immortal soul? Are the tramps and harlots, the clergymen and philosophers, actresses and shop girls, immortal? Do you, like everyone else, carry about with you in mind or body some indestructible element? It would be a very curious state of affairs in which men considered these questions either trivial or uninteresting. If there is any answer to them you want to know that answer. If when you die your life goes out like a snuffed candle, there's an end of you and the discussion together.

Under these circumstances life is merely a tedious or pleasant struggle, which finishes in bankruptcy.

The character you have built up goes for nothing. The love for wife or child which has grown up during a lifetime of gentle sacrifice is cheated of its full development. It is as though one played a long and desperate game with worthless counters, which one could not "cash in" when the game was over.

If man is immortal will he know himself after death, and will he carry the same personality into a future state of development? Then it may be that his present life is merely part of a rational plan. Ten or fifteen years ago science promised to tell you all about it. The sciences made many promises, few of which they have kept. They have simply substituted the new superstitions of science for the old superstitions of religion. The question remains: "Is Man Immortal?"

If you ask the man in the street whether he has an immortal soul he will grin and pass on, but you may take it for a fact that he is thinking about the matter quite as seriously as you are. Men do not care to parade their thoughts on this subject.

The Morning Advertiser believes this problem is just as momentous in summer as in winter. In this it is not altogether in accord with the majority of New York clergymen. The churches are closed. The ministers are in Europe, in the mountains or at the seaside. In spite of that this is just as good

a time as any other to find out whether you have an immortal soul or not.

(An article from the pen of Dr. Inge, the leading Theologian of this country has already appeared).

Other articles will follow in The Morning Advertiser. President E. Benj. Andrews, of Brown University; Swami Vivekananda, the distinguished Hindu; Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, the authoress of "The Gates Ajar;" Cardinal Gibbons, W. T. Stead, the English journalist and spiritualist; Bishop John P. Newman, Professor Max Muller, Elliott Cones, of the Smithsonian Institution, and other men and women of prominence will present what they consider proofs of man's immortality. When you have read these articles you may have found an answer to the question.

If you know anything about immortality, if you have proofs or doubts, The Morning Advertiser will willingly print your letters.

The main discussion is continued to-day by Swami Vivekananda, the learned and thoughtful Hindu. He argues that there can be no annihilation of the soul, with picturesque force.

The Distinguished Hindu bases his argument on the Mahābhārata.

None has power to destroy the unchangeable.

—Gita.

In the great Sanskrit epic the Mahābhārata the story is told how the hero, Yudhishthira, when asked by Dharmas to tell what was the most wonderful thing in the world, replied that it was the persistent belief of mankind in their own deathlessness in spite of their witnessing death everywhere around them almost every moment of their lives.

And in fact, this is the most stupendous wonder in human life. In spite of all arguments to the contrary urged in different times by different schools, in spite of the inability of reason to penetrate the veil of mystery which will ever hang between the sensuous and the supersensuous worlds, man is thoroughly persuaded that he cannot die.

We may study all our lives, and in the end fail to bring the problem of life and death to the plane of rational demonstration, affirmative or negative. We may talk or write, preach or teach, for or against the permanency or sporadicity of human existence as much as we like; we may become violent partisans of this side or that; we may invent names by the hundreds, each more intricate than its predecessor, and lull ourselves in a momentary rest under the delusion of our having solved the problem once for all—nay, we may cling with all our powers to any one of the curious religious superstitions or the far more disgusting scientific superstitions—in the end we find ourselves playing an eternal game in the bowling alley of reason and raising intellectual pin after pin, only to be knocked over again and again.

But behind all this mental strain and torture, not infrequently productive of more dangerous games than mere play, stands a fact unchallenged and unchallengeable—the fact, the wonder, which

the Mahabharata points out as the inability of our mind to conceive our own annihilation.

Even to imagine my own annihilation I will have to stand by and look on as a witness.

Now, before trying to understand what this curious phenomenon means, we want to note that upon this one fact the whole world is standing. The permanence of the external world is inevitably joined to the permanence of the internal, and, however plausible any theory of the universe may seem which denies the permanence of the one and asserts that of the other, the very theorist will find that in his own mechanism not one conscious action is possible without the permanence of both the internal and external worlds being one of the factors in the motive cause. Although it is perfectly true that when the human mind transcends its own limitations it finds the duality reduced to an indivisible unity, on this side of the unconditioned, the whole objective world—that is to say, the world we know—is and can be alone known to us as existing for the subject, and, therefore, before we would be able to conceive the annihilation of the subject we are bound to conceive the annihilation of the object.

So far it is plain enough. But now comes the difficulty. I cannot think of myself ordinarily as anything but a body. My idea of my own permanence includes my idea of myself as a body. But the body is obviously impermanent as is the whole of nature a constantly vanishing quantity.

Where, then, is this permanence?

There is one more wonderful phenomenon connected with our lives, without which "who will be able to live, who will be able to enjoy life a moment?"—the idea of freedom.

This is the idea that guides every footstep of ours, makes our movements possible, determines our relations to each other—nay, is the very warp and woof in the fabric of human life. Intellectual knowledge tries to drive it inch by inch from its territory, post after post is snatched away from its domains, and each step is made fast and iron bound with the railroads of cause and effect. But it laughs at all our attempts, and, lo, it keeps from above all this massive pile of law and causation with which we tried to smother it to death. How can it be otherwise? The limited always requires a higher generalization of the unlimited to explain itself. The bound can only be explained by the free, the cause by the uncaused.

But, again, the same difficulty is also here. What is free? The body, or even the mind? It is apparent to all that they are as much bound by law as anything else in the universe.

Now the problem resolves itself into this dilemma: Either the whole universe is a mass of never ceasing change and nothing more, irrevocably bound by the law of causation, not one particle having a unity of itself, yet is curiously producing an irradicable delusion of permanence and freedom, or there is in us and in the universe something which is permanent and free, and that the basal constitutional belief of the human mind is not a delusion.

It is the duty of science to explain facts by bringing them to a higher generalization. Any explanation, therefore, that wants to destroy, first, a part of the facts given to be explained in order to fit itself to the remainder is not science, whatever else it may be.

Now, any explanation that wants to overlook the fact of this persistent and all necessary idea of freedom commits the above-mentioned mistake of denying a portion of the fact in order to explain the rest, and is, therefore, wrong.

The only other alternative possible, then, is to acknowledge, in harmony with our nature, that there is something in us which is free and permanent.

But it is not the body; neither is it the mind. The body is dying every minute. The mind is constantly changing. The body is a combination. So is the mind, and as such can never reach to a state beyond all change.

But beyond both this momentary sheathing of gross matter, beyond even the finer covering of the mind, is the Atman, the true self of man, the permanent, the ever free.

It is his freedom that is percolating through layers of thought and matter, and in spite of the colorings of name and form is ever asserting its unshackled existence. It is his deathlessness, his bliss, his peace, this divinity in humanity, that shines out and makes itself felt in spite of the thickest layers of ignorance. He is the real man the fearless one, the deathless one, the free.

Now, freedom is only possible when no external power can exert any influence, produce any change. Freedom is only possible to the being who is beyond all conditions, all laws, all bondages of cause and effect. In other words, the unchangeable alone can be free and, therefore, immortal.

This being, this Atman, this real self of man, the free, the unchangeable, is beyond all conditions, and as such it has neither birth nor death.

Without birth or death eternal, ever existing is this soul of man.—*The New York Morning Advertiser.*

THE ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY.

BY

N. VAITHIANATHA Aiyar, M.A.

This school of philosophy founded or at least put prominently before the Indian world by Sri Sankara is, as its name indicates, the negation of two existences. There is, in its view, one and only one entity which may be said to have existed in the past or to exist in the present and which alone exists for ever, self-sufficient and all-embracing. It is attributeless (निरुक्त), actionless (निष्क्रिय), feelingless (शान्त) perfect (निर्वय), and spotless (निर्वज्जन). It is described in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad as "unseen but seeing, unheard but hearing, unperceived but perceiving, unknown but knowing. There is nothing that does but it, nothing that hears but it, nothing that perceives but it, nothing that knows but it." This ultimate entity,

the Brahman is to be described by "no, no." He is incomprehensible, imperishable, unattached, unfettered. The Khândogya Upanishad says: "Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the Infinite."

How is this conclusion reached? What then is the explanation of the material world and of the human soul? The one ultimate Brahman has been declared to be without attributes; we cannot, therefore, explain the material world and the human soul as his creations, for then we would be predicating of him the attribute of creation. When it is stated that the Brahman alone exists, the meaning is not simply that in some former period, prior to the creation by or emanation from Him, of the universe, He alone existed; there is a denial as well of real existence to the solid universe which spreads itself so tangibly on all sides of us; and the human soul itself is not viewed as an existence in the ordinary sense of that term. We shall see how the Advaitin arrives at and maintains these bold speculations.

The assertion of the existence of the Brahman as the one ultimate reality is based partly upon rational considerations and partly upon Vedic texts. We should state once for all that the Hindu philosopher would never base his reasonings exclusively upon experience and inference. He ever seeks the support of the Vedas for his conclusions. It should not be supposed that this practice of viewing the Vedas as the ultimate authority in the decision of all questions restricts in any way the scope for unfettered reasoning. The Vedic texts are varied, and, not being intended to support any particularly organised system of thought, are pliable enough to lend support to many different views. The appeal to the Vedas is, therefore, to be regarded more as a sign of orthodoxy which the thinker is never disposed to depart from, than as the final resort to a set of well-arranged truths by which to settle peremptorily all disputed points. Not that each philosopher is not convinced that the Vedas uniformly and consistently support his special theory. The difficulties in the way of interpreting particular texts in consonance with his views, he regards as due to his own short-comings and as the inevitable impediments which the human intelligence has to encounter in his efforts to master the significance of the Divine words, but never as the inherent defects of the Vedic compositions. In endeavouring to grapple with the problems of metaphysics, the intellect frames a system for itself on grounds furnished to it by its own powers, even though it may be reposing all the while in faith and confidence upon a body of holy Scripture. When, for example, we take up a passage for interpretation, the mind first images to itself, in a vague way it may be, the significance of the words. With this vague image in our possession, an image suggested indeed by the passage but built up by the mind almost entirely upon its own conceptions, we go over the words, compare, how far the mental picture corresponds with their significance, and modify it and draw its lineaments definitely in the course of such a comparison. In the same way, the world and

its phenomena, of which the real nature we would learn, suggest to the mind imaged with the teachings of the Vedas thoughts as to their origin and end, which thoughts take form and definiteness in the course of a careful scrutiny of the nature and contents of our knowledge. If such a scrutiny discloses apparent inconsistencies in the sacred books, faith and reverence would ascribe them to the ignorance of the inquiring mind rather than attach them to the graciously revealed Ordinances of God.

The endless mutation going on in the material world all around us, the origin, decay, and destruction of the several objects in it, naturally lead us to look upon the contents of the universe, which are visible at one moment and invisible at the next, which existed yesterday and do not exist now, to look upon the universe itself, as perishable. But in the human soul we note no such variations; it stands apart a considerable way from these, and remains one and the same in the midst of so many changes. It is the spectator, as it were, of the movements towards birth and destruction, of the objects around it. Even the body with which it lives in association undergoes a series of changes, but the soul stands alone unaffected by them. Sleep does not cut off the continuity of its existence; and in dreams we have evidence of a close kinship between sleep-life and conscious-life.

There arises hence an idea of contrast between the soul or, to adopt the language of the west, the mind, on the one hand, and the external world on the other. The one is the same and has a continuity of life which is not to be found in the other. The one is a permanent entity which the other is not. From our consciousness of an unbroken continuity in our inner life, from the like experience of our fellowmen and also from the conviction that there is this soul or something like it in all beings constituted as we are, we rise to the idea of the continuity of its existence subsequent to the destruction of the body and prior to its birth. The soul has a future and must have had a past. The idea of death attaches itself after this stage in the progress of knowledge has been reached, to matter as opposed to not-matter or spirit. The former undergoes destruction, as we daily observe; but the latter stands unaffected even by the changes in the body; and the continuity of existence which it has during our conscious life cannot but be prolonged into the past and the future, and we conceive the soul as eternal as compared with the perishable not-soul.

But why should this soul, which is thus opposed in its nature to matter, stand associated with a perishable body? Why should matter again gyrate through a cycle of changes? The Advaitin's usual answer to these questions is his theory of creation. The whole is made to rest on a Divine Creator, which is the central force round which play the physical universe and the spirit of man.

There are thus formed in the thinking mind three distinctly marked conceptions:—a material world, the spiritual world of man and the Divine Originator of all. Next in the order of progressive thought arises the question whether these are three distinct and ultimate entities corresponding to these

three conceptions. Western philosophy, raising its edifice upon the basis of the human intellect, denies in one of its phases, real existence to matter which is to it only a phenomenon conjured up into existence by our senses, or by the mind under the sway of the senses. These are the sole media we have for the reception of the knowledge of the external world, and objects outside us are, so far as they are known to us, only aggregates of sensations. To each one of us certain groups of conscious states, specifically gathered up into separable bundles, make up the whole of his outer world. With him perish his sensations and the world as well which his mind laboriously built up for him out of his sensations. The fiction of world cannot possibly survive the sensations which brought it into being. Each mind lives in the midst of its own imaginary world and will stand free from the illusion after the destruction of the body and, with it, of the senses which induced it to construct such a fiction. There is no material world in reality; there are only soul-intelligences in confinement, driven to special modes of illusory constructiveness because of the circumstances of that confinement. Human life is a dream amidst the transitory shows of sense. If the universe is to be regarded philosophically, it must, in the best analysis, be regarded as composed of spirits or self-conscious persons, with their respective sense-phenomena. "Nothing properly but persons, i. e., conscious things, does exist. All other things are not so much existences themselves as manners of the existence of conscious persons."

Such is the Idealism of Berkeley. Hindu philosophy has advanced through the same reasoning to the same conclusion. But to it this conclusion is but a step in the metaphysical resolution of phenomena and of existences to one ultimate entity. The Idealism above described leaves the human soul or souls as an entity or entities, side by side with the Divine Essence. The English bishop postulates two ultimate spiritualities as underlying the universe. The Advaitin is not satisfied with such a view. Is the human soul an only substance? Or has each individual a distinct soul, which, though of the same nature as the souls of other individuals, yet stands a distinct entity for ever? Millions of men have lived in the world, and millions upon millions of the lower animals also. These latter must have souls as well as man. They are like him in many respects; they have the same senses as he has, and have the same facilities for the perception and knowledge of the external world; they are pleased and pained, and are capable of affection and anger; they have memory, and the ability to discriminate and identify; and they have perhaps, besides the language of signs, a language of their own not intelligible to man. In these circumstances the Hindu mind has always recoiled from the inhuman and irrational theory that would sacrifice the animal world to human pride and to human glory. If once we go below man in our conception of soul life, we can draw no arbitrary line anywhere and deny that privilege to the animals below that line.

Postulating thus the existence of such an infinity of soul-existences, the question is whether these

form separate entities, or are but sparks of a common comprehensive soul. The spirit of man and of the animal world is something distinct from material existence. That it exists we know from the testimony of consciousness. Is this testimony conclusive? We are aware of a continuous series of mental phenomena which pass in succession through the arena of consciousness during our waking moments. (If the existence of a soul distinct from these fleeting phenomena, of which these may be regarded as manifestations or modifications, we have no direct or positive evidence. Of this soul, in a state of freedom from the body, we know nothing whatever, and it is in that state absolutely beyond the reach of our knowledge. The existence of the soul has always been vehemently opposed by the sceptic. But, for all this, if once we grant the existence of a spiritual element in man, it is difficult to resist the logic that would assert the same of the whole animal kingdom. And if soul-life be accorded to all animals, past, present, and future, it would be difficult to decide whether each animal soul is a distinct entity, destined to persist in its individuality throughout eternity, or whether there is but one soul to support the whole of the animal creation. The latter alternative has found favor with the Advaita philosopher. In his view the same essence that stands for ever, perfect and without a second, is transformed into the *jivas* or souls of animals; it is but one unity and is not divided off into an infinite number of separate existences for the purpose of sustaining the multiplicity of animal lives. And the manner in which it maintains its unity and yet answers to the vast number of animal existences will be explained later on.

Having thus reduced the vast multiplicity of animal souls to one *Jivatman* the Advaitin is naturally drawn to the question of its relation to *Paramatman*—the Supreme Soul. He easily demolished the material world so patient to our senses; he is confident that the whole of animal existence answers to but one *Jivatman* which sustains all individual animal existences in some mysterious fashion; and his attention is now directed to the determination of the mutual relationship of the two entities *Jivatman* and *Paramatman*, which thus remain as realities in his analytical view of the world. Are these, as a matter of final analysis, two distinct realities? Will it be a rational inference to believe so? Both are unknown and unknowable; as noumena both are beyond our experience. The *Jivas* of the universe, those which are animating existing animal frames, and those which once animated such frames, all these have been unified as one pervasive reality. Its power to comprise so vast a range of animal life, its being one for all and hence all-embracing, brings the conception of it too near the conception of the Divine Essence, to allow of the philosopher stopping short of identifying it with the latter. If the individuality of animal souls is abandoned, if there is but one *Jivatman* to uphold the whole of animal creation, the intellect can hardly resist the strong impression of identity between this all-embracing and all-pervasive *Jivatman* and the *Paramatman*. The *Jiva* only appears to be

divided off into parts to form the souls of men and animals. And the Brahman when conditioned by the limiting frames of animals appears as *Jiva*. The space enclosed inside the pot is not different from the space outside, and yet the two appear to be distinct. The like relation holds between the soul of animals and the Soul of the Universe.

The inquiring mind thus rests upon the conviction of its identity with the one ultimate Brahman. The objects on all sides of us, the sun, moon and stars, the solid earth and even our own bodily frames, which are immediately the objects of our tenderest regards, all are illusions entangling the *Jiva* in false impressions and beliefs, and perish at the approach of real knowledge—the knowledge that our *Atman* is one with the *Paramâtman*. Ignorance (*Mâyâ* or *Avidyâ*) creates in us the false conviction that this is a real, substantial world, fills us with desires and impulses, and is the centre of all illusory phantoms. With destruction of this ignorance all its creations disappear, as the destruction of the pot destroys the artificial distinction between the space enclosed by the pot and the space outside it. The *Atman* is all-embracing and blissful and such is the only conception we can form of him. He is otherwise incomprehensible to us and we can predicate of him no attributes known to our limited intellects.

But this resolution of the material world to nothing and the postulation of a single ultimate entity as the only substance that can be said to exist, are opposed in many ways to our actual experience. This theory has to solve the difficult problem of creation. Why should the Brahman allow himself to be enveloped by the dark cover of ignorance or *Avidyâ*? Why should he modify himself into the *Jiva*? If he be desireless, why the desire in him to appear as *Jiva* and to create the world, illusory though it be? The *Jiva* is said to pass through many grades of existence and is certainly subject to pleasures and pains. Is this consistent with the assertion of its oneness with the *Paramâtman*?

The intellect in a spirit of logical destructiveness was forced to reduce the three entities of matter, mind and God, to one, leaving the Divine Essence alone as enduring for ever. And instead of commencing the inquiry from that Essence and filling up the mysterious processes of creation in the fanciful way in which they are filled up in the Christian Bible, the Hindu philosopher adopts the reverse, order and traces back the phenomena of the universe to their origin in the Divine Entity. This alone survives his analytic search for truth. His conclusion, however reached, is exactly the same as the fundamental principle of the Biblical conception of the universe. At one point in the world's history both assert that God alone was in existence. But He fashioned and created the world in some definite manner according to the Christian Scriptures. To the question whether this creation by God meant an addition of substance to what existed before, or whether it was simply an evolution from the Divine substance, neither western philosophy nor western theology has given a consistent or rational reply. The Advaita philosophy meets the difficulty by

denying reality to the created world. In its own nominal existence can be predicated only of the Brahman. Creation is but an illusion and can make no nominal addition to the one person or entity that alone comprises the universe. There is the place of the Biblical God who stood a moment prior to creation the Advaitin believes in an all-embracing intelligence which eternally exists and which alone exists—the created matter being but an illusory perception of the human soul; and the human soul itself is no other than the absolute Brahman conditioned and limited by *Avidyâ* or ignorance. The believer in the Bible is not called upon to the severe exercise of scientific imagination and argument required to grasp the theory of the illusion of the world and of the identity of *Jiva* and Brahman. To him the world is a real world; the deluge simply washes its surface; its ultimate fate does not disturb him; it may be eternal quite as well as its Creator. But the traditions of the East and the subjectivity of its intellect have impelled it to inquiries behind and beyond the present and the visible. And our school of philosophy boldly steps over the ruins of the material universe and even of our personal consciousness to one ultimate reality. It sees in the world as it now lies before us four distinct existences, *Mâyâ* (ignorance); *Ivara* (the creator); *Jiva* with his load of *Karma* and lastly the Brahman. All these are beginning-less (*Anâdi*), but the first three have an end. Take the world as it is, and you find in it the work of these ultimate causes. Here they are and at work. How they came into being we do not know. But the effort of the *Jiva* is to conquer the illusory creations of *Mâyâ* and perceive its identity with the Brahman. *Ivara* is the Brahman covered up by *Mâyâ* and engaged in creative work under the impelling force of the *Karma* of the *Jiva*. The world comes into illusory existence from the hands of *Ivara*. The Brahman is attributeless and has no desires; but when conditioned by *Mâyâ*, He, as *Ivara* is impelled to create, thereby to enable the *Jiva* to work out its destiny and liberate itself from the bondage of *Mâyâ*. If we go behind the phenomenal, we would see that at no time has there been anything in existence besides the Brahman. But to our mind, deluded by the phenomenal, that is, by *Mâyâ*, the creator *Ivara*, the created world and we ourselves appear to be real and distinct entities. Knowledge enables the *Jiva* to destroy this *Mâyâ* and attain salvation in the recognition of its true nature. Taking the individual by himself, his *Jiva* or soul is the eternal Brahman conditioned by the animal frame; and when thus conditioned it is subject to the sway of *Mâyâ* or *Avidyâ* and is unable consequently either to perceive the illusory nature of the world or its own oneness with the *Paramâtman*. The Advaitin is proud of his "I am *Jiva*". "I am the thing that exists, the intelligence, and the Bliss". "Thou art that", &c. These words of the Upanishads are treasured up in all faith and reverence; and the world, our souls, creation and all questions of metaphysics receive a solution in harmony with this proud identification of self with God.

(To be continued.)

BHAKTI.

III
N. RAMANUJAM, B. A.

Bhakti means love or devotion. All psychologists know that love is a sympathetic feeling of attachment to the object that we hold dear. It is the opposite of hate. We all know that the purest form of love in this world is manifested when it is directed to a worthy object without any considerations of self-interest. We cannot 'trade in love'; and it is our nature to love and be satisfied with love. If such be the purest form of the love of man to man, what shall we say of that absolute love for its own sake directed towards Him, who is the one cause of our being, the life and soul of all that exists, in whom we live and move and have our being, and realizing whom within ourselves as the Soul of our soul, is the end and aim of all existence? This is the highest form of *Bhakti*; Sāṅdilya says in his aphorisms on *Bhakti*, that in its highest form, it is the love fixed on God. Rāmānuja in his *Vedānta Saṅgraha* which is a discourse on the teachings of the Upanishads thus defines *Bhakti*:—It is a state of consciousness in which Self and its interests are absolutely disregarded in the extreme and irrevocable love of God for its own sake. It is the same state of feeling as influenced Prahlāda, the prince of devotees, when he prayed to God in the following words:—"O God through whatever series of births I may be destined to pass, I pray to thee to enable me to possess the same unswerving love to thee in every one of them."

There are two forms of *Bhakti*—*Parā Bhakti* or *Sādhya Bhakti* and *Sādhana Bhakti*. The former is the end of which the latter is the means. The *Sādhya Bhakti* is the extreme love towards God, consequent on the spiritual illumination or vision of the Supreme, realized in the highest state of *Samādhi*. It is the love of God, the living god that has become a reality for us, the god that has been seen within ourselves, and of whose existence and glory, we have had the fullest assurance and experience. This is the goal to which *Bhakti-Yoga* leads directly and all other forms of *Yoga* practices more or less indirectly. After the realization of this *Parā Bhakti*, the devotee has no more concern with the world. He takes no thought for the morrow. He becomes a *Jīvan Mukta*; just waiting for final release from the bondage of *Karma*, till his *Prārabdha Karma* should exhaust itself. Henceforth he lives for God and God alone. If he does any service for the world, it is not to obtain any reward for himself but for the sake of the God in whom and for whom we all are.

A pious devotee who has found refuge in God is made to say in the *Mahabharata*, addressing the world, "From this time forward, Oh ye of the world, you are yourselves and we are ourselves, we shall have nothing to do with each other. You are all devoted to pleasure and wealth, but we are devoted to the service of Nārāyaṇa."

Bhakti in this aspect of it is held to be synonymous with *Tadāsa* or *Nidhidhyāsana* which is declared

in the Upanishad as one of the means for attaining *Moksha*—liberation. It comes after *Sravana*—hearing, *Manana*—contemplation and *Abhyāsa*—exercise in mental concentration. This highest *Bhakti* is according to our ancient teachers the only means of obtaining release from the miseries of *Samsāra*—of successive births and deaths. When this state of mind called *Parābhakti* is attained, the soul of man becomes qualified to deserve the grace of God. It is then that God out of His infinite mercy chooses the man so qualified for deliverance and reveals Himself fully unto him. This truth is fully brought out in the following passage in the *Mundakopaniṣad*:—The Supreme Soul cannot be gained by the Vedas, nor by understanding, nor by much learning. He whom the Supreme Soul chooses, by him, the Supreme Soul can be gained and unto him it fully reveals itself. Sri Krishna says the same thing to Arjuna in the *Bhagavat Gītā*. After showing him his all-pervading, all-comprehending universal form he remarks, "Even the gods are always desirous to see this form of mine which is difficult to get a sight of, and which you have seen. In the way in which you have seen me I cannot be seen by means of the Vedas, not by penance, not by gift, nor yet by sacrifice. But, O Arjuna, by devotion to me exclusively, I can in this form be truly known, seen and entered into." And somewhere else he says, "If you be devoted to me you will overcome all obstacles and gain an unchangeable condition of bliss by my grace" and "those that take refuge in me alone cross this ocean of *Māyā*."

Sādhana Bhakti—devotion as a means, comprises all the work and worship that is expected of the devotee. It includes also the well-known eight *Angas* or parts of *Yoga*—*Yama*, *Niyama*, &c. Worthy knowledge, worthy work and worthy self-restraint are all conducive to the exercise of devotion, and form essential parts of *Sādhana Bhakti*.

To understand well the Indian doctrine of *Bhakti*, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the views of our ancient sages on the subject of God, soul, and the supreme end and aim of the soul. The Hindu scriptures declare that there is a soul in every living being, god-like in nature and possessed of divine attributes. Its essence is freedom, intelligence and bliss; but its freedom is limited in the state of *Samsāra*. Though essentially of the same nature as the god who sustains and guides it, it is obliged on account of its *Karma* to suffer all the miseries of countless births and rebirths. Our scriptures also declare that there is a God in whom we all live and move and have our being, who is one with us, yet different, who is distant, yet who is near, not known but felt, and who if the light of lights, the soul of the soul, the supreme essence, the supreme reality, and the guide and ruler of everything that has been, is, or shall be. He is all glory, all bliss, all mercy, omnipotent, omnipresent and the knower of all. "It is only Him the Brahmas wish to know and realize with the aid of the Vedas, austerities, gifts, sacrifices and love." By knowing Him alone one overcomes death, there

is no other road to immortality," says an Upanishad.

The end and aim of life for every human being is according to the *Sūtras*, the realization by him, of the fact, that he is not of this world, that he is of divine nature and has his being in God. All beings are of Him and live in Him, and it is therefore the birthright of all men and women, of all nationalities and of all conditions of life, to deserve and claim the life of eternal bliss in God.

Jesus Christ also distinctly declares the eternal abiding of the soul in God. He says, "I live eternally in the bosom of my father" and "I and my father are one." This passage if properly interpreted must mean, that the pure and liberated soul eternally abides in God and is therefore one with him.

The practice of *Bhakti-Yoga* is absolutely necessary for one desirous of salvation. It has for its aim not the realization of any latent occult powers in man, not even, as it is sometimes supposed, the realization of the essential oneness of the spiritual part of man, but the full realization of, and the enjoyment of supreme bliss in, God, the universal spirit. This highest state in *Yoga* can be attained only through the grace of a spiritual preceptor, *Sat Guru*.

The highest form of *Bhakti* is *Pāra Bhakti* or *Sādhya Bhakti* called *Nidhidhyāsana* in the Upanishads. As has been already explained, it is the love unspeakable experienced by a devotee consequent on what amounts to the direct perception of God in his own soul. It is the direct means of attaining *Moksha*, which comes in due course in accordance with the *Sankalpa* or Will of the most High. The *Sruti*s declare, 'The knot of the heart is rent asunder, all doubts are destroyed and all *karmas* vanish, when both the higher and lower (*viz.* God and soul) have been perceived.'

The lower or *Sādhani Bhakti* pre-supposes, purity both of body and mind, and the performance of all one's duties in life. It pre-supposes also all those things mentioned in the *Gītā* as the means of attaining spiritual illumination,—absence of vanity, absence of ostentatiousness, absence of hurtfulness, devotion to the preceptor, purity, steadiness, self-restraint, in difference towards objects of sense, and also absence of egotism, perception of the misery and evil of birth, of death, old age and disease; absence of attachment, absence of self-identifying regard for son, wife, house and so forth; and constant equability on the approach of both what is agreeable and disagreeable; unswerving devotion to me (Sri Krishna) without meditation on any one else; resorting to clean places, distaste for crowded assemblages of men, constancy in the knowledge of the relation of the individual soul to the Supreme and the perception of the object of true knowledge." These with contemplation, meditation and concentration on the Supreme will lead to the highest spiritual illumination of *Pāra Bhakti*.

There is another form of *Bhakti* superior to the *Bhakti-Yoga* above-mentioned, one that can be easily realized by all without laborious study and the practice of methodical meditation and mental concentration. This form of *Bhakti* is meant for all

and invites all, irrespective of caste and condition to come under its protecting influence. It is known as *Prapatti Yoga*, otherwise called *Nyāsa Vidyā* and is the method of resignation. Along with purity both bodily and mental, and the performance of one's duties in life as a means of worshipping God, it requires nothing more than a full and living sense of one's littleness and absolute dependence on God. A *Prapanna* who resorts to this means of salvation, seeks refuge in the mercy of God, and surrenders himself completely to Him who is his rightful Lord and Master. He is devoid of all cares and anxieties and ambitions, having placed himself entirely in the hands of God. This state of mind combined with an all-exceeding love for God is capable of producing at once spiritual illumination and *Mukti*. Such a thing is possible through God's infinite mercy, and love for those who take refuge in Him. The peculiarity of *Prapatti* is that it makes man's dependence and reliance upon God, as well as God's love to man, the means of attaining God. God Himself is here directly both the means and end.

It is the object of the *Gītā* to reveal this truth to mankind. In it Sri Krishna says, "Once more listen to my excellent words—most mysterious of all; strongly I like you and therefore declare unto you, what is good for your welfare. Ever think of me, become my devotee, sacrifice to me and bow to me. I promise truly that you will come to me ultimately as you are dear to me; forsaking all law-ordained performances, come to me as your sole refuge, and I will release you from all sins. Do not be grieved." Does He not say elsewhere that His devotee is never ruined and that He is Himself the means to lift him up from the miseries of *Samsārā*. This is in brief the essence of all our scriptures, proclaimed to the weary and sin-laden world without any distinction of caste or colour or creed. This is the universal doctrine of mercy, of love and hope, taught by God himself to all his creatures. Sri Krishna himself declares the universal applicability of this doctrine of *Bhakti* to all mankind. "For O son of Pritha, even those who are of sinful birth, women, *Vaiśyas* and *Sūdras* like-wise resorting to me attain the supreme goal. What then has to be said of holy Brahmins and royal saints who are my devotees?" Such is the declaration of the *Gītā* to the world on man's destiny and his means of attaining it.

Correspondence.

THE END OF STRUGGLES.

Let us imagine a certain place beyond the celestial sphere which contains all the heavenly bodies, beyond the limits of what we understand by the term *Universe*; and let us suppose that the Lord of the *Universe* appears there as he appeared to Moses on Horeb, the mountain of the Lord. And let us suppose Him to will the entire sphere, in whose immense capacity all the innumerable stellar and

solar systems are contained, to be reduced to the form of a pin, without any disturbance to the relative positions of all the heavenly bodies as well as of all the things that are in them, allowing all His creatures to be where they are, only to be diminished in size in regular proportion to the vast diminution, without the least motion and knowledge on the part of the living and sentient denizens of the universe, and let this event take place within the twinkling of an eye, since nothing is impossible to Him who has created the entire cosmos out of His own will.

Then let us see what will take place with us here on earth. Of course our mental phenomena or ideas will not suffer at all by this vast diminution, since they are without extension either to be specially increased or diminished. Now as to our physical body and the objects of our perception, so long as the relative position of all the parts of our bodies, as well of all the things under the cognition of our senses, remains the same, it is plain that no change will be recognised by us. This will become clear by the following illustrations:—

I shall imagine my reader to look, through the wrong end of an opera glass, at the men and women passing through the street opposite to his room. How very much smaller they will appear! Then let him shut the doors and windows of his room to make it dark, and after this let him look again for some minutes through the same wrong end towards the men and women of the busy street full of traffic through an orifice made in the window. After a few minutes the darkness of the room having barred his sight from his surroundings, and thereby having prevented him from comparing the smaller things in the street with the actual things round him, and his memory of these things having faded a little by that time, the people in the street will no longer appear to him to be so much smaller; and if this operation be continued a little longer they will almost appear to be natural men and women.

Or I shall imagine him to be enamoured with a fine picture drawn by a master hand. The mountain, the running stream, the trees, the men and women at play, the cattle grazing by the side of the brook in the picture will all appear to him to be real and living. He forgets for the moment that all those things are depicted upon a few square inches of canvas. Why is this? Because the relative proportions of the mountain, the stream, the trees, the men and women, and the cattle, etc., in the real world, have been preserved in the picture by the expert painter.

The optical illusion regarding extension is, although experienced by every one, yet is greatly overlooked. When an object gradually wanes in size as the distance between it and the observer is increased, or when we see it magnified or diminished according as we see it through the right or the wrong end of a telescope, the infinite variety of forms which the same object assumes, proves that there is no definite and permanent form of extension, which does not change.

In the state of dream, when all our external organs are inactive, the mind creates a world for itself. We then see, feel, touch, and move and do all sorts of things as in a waking state, although our bodies do not move at all. In this case the space is purely a mental creation.

Although in reality by the supposed fiat of God everything above, below, and around us, like our own bodies, have been immensely diminished we cannot help, thinking that we are the same as before. Now let us ponder over this change. Astronomers tell us that there is an innumerable number of stars so distant that their rays have not yet reached us here on earth since their creation. This immense distance is

almost incomprehensible. All such stars are contained in what we called the celestial sphere. Therefore the vastness of this imaginary sphere is much more incomprehensible. Now to think of so vast a thing to be reduced to the form of so small a thing as a pin without the least knowledge on our part of so great a change is no doubt very incredible, although it is the case if the conditions stated are fulfilled.

Then what is space? Has it any real and absolute or independent existence? We have seen that it has only a relative existence, and this relativity of its existence is altogether deceiving.

Duality is the beginning of relativity. The moment two things or two ideas start up relativity begins. Then we begin to differentiate one thing or idea from the other. Here is the beginning of knowledge and elementary reasoning. Hence we proceed to more complex reasoning by coming across a variety of things or ideas, till for the sake of convenience we name them differently by looking at their differences; and we retain these various ideas and names in our mind by the relative faculty, called memory, the storehouse of our knowledge. So we see that relativity is the cause of our knowledge, and that space is nothing but an idea of relation.

Let us consider the matter from another point of view. Let us go beyond relativity by considering about unity. Let us imagine that all the infinite number of colours are blended into one single colour white or red or anything else. Then because there is only one colour we cannot give it any particular name to distinguish it from any other colour, for by hypothesis there is only one colour. After this suppose an observer looks out. Then he will see nothing, neither his physical body nor the world external; for if he sees anything in the world he must realise a variety of colour which by assumption there is not. It will be very much the same when in an inactive state of the mind we shut our eyes, then no idea of space is at all present in our mind. But then again we may imagine the observer to grope his way. His muscular energy producing locomotion and his idea of the length or the shortness of duration of muscular exercise, can give him an idea of space. Let us suppose him to be devoid of the power of locomotion. Then again his sense of touch can give him an idea of extension, for he can feel two or more distinct sensations of touch in the different parts of his body. Now suppose him again devoid of the sense of touch. Then his two ears can furnish him with the idea by the waning and waxing of sound producing the idea of furthest and nearness. Now, if again I suppose him to be deaf, his tongue can be of use to him; for if a little sugar is placed near the root of his tongue while a particle of quinine is applied to its tip, then two different sensations will be felt in two different places thus producing the idea of extension. Now let us consider whether the observer's nose has anything to do with that idea. Yes, it has; for two different sensations of smell in two different places may be experienced by him by getting before his

nostrils two different flowers, one before each nostril.

Now we have seen that every one of our five senses our muscular sense and the idea of time, have all to contribute to the idea of space, and that this idea is altogether relative.

Let us lastly suppose the observer to be devoid of the power of smelling. What, then, remains to make him conscious of extension? Nothing. In this state he can only be conscious of ideas stored up in his mind by memory, their succession producing the idea of time. Let him then rise above his memory, for it is in the power of every man to call up an idea in his memory or not, that entirely depending upon his own choice. So let us suppose him not to be ruffled by any idea called up by his memory. He is then no more a sentient being driven hither and thither by the storm of sensations, perceptions, and ideas in the illimitable ocean of space and time. He is now above them, being consciousness itself enjoying beatific quietude, a purely absolute existence, above relativity. Indian Yogis call this state *Sacchidananda Brahma* that is, pure existence, pure consciousness and beatific calm. Here is the end of all struggles.

Now let us consider the difficulties of attaining such a state. When a Yogi tries to concentrate his mind he sits in a cross-legged posture, holds his body erect—upon a level plain neither too high nor too low—shuts his eyes and tries to separate his mind from all his senses. So far it is easy. For a time he can baffle the delusion of space. But he finds a great deal of difficulty to struggle with time; for a long succession of random mental phenomena intrude on his mental field. The cause of this disturbance is the ever active habit of his mind acquired by long association with the senses. Even after the carriage has been cut away from the running train it moves a good distance by its own inertia. It requires an opposing force to check its course and it can not be stopped all at once, and if it be attempted there will be a great shock which may lead to the injury of the carriage. The best way is to allow it to move along only trying at the same time to retard its motion gently as much as you can. So in this case, Allow the mind to oscillate between one idea and another for a time, then try to retard the oscillation by compelling it to oscillate in relation to one and the same idea. This can be done by the mental repetition of a single word, called *mantra* in Sanskrit and the best mantra in this case of mental concentration is the *pranava* (ॐ) of the Vedas. The meaning of the *Pranava* is *Sacchidananda Brahma* where all struggles end; and hence the repetition of that mantra inclines the mind to, and prepares it for that blessed state. Any other mantra than the *Pranava* does not so well serve the purpose, for it requires the help either of the throat, palate, teeth, or lips, &c., for its articulation, whereas the *Pranava* requires the least physical exertion for its utterance and therefore is the more suited for mental repetition. Hence it has been pronounced to be the best of all the Mantras; and

because it helps the attainment of eternal peace in *Brahma* it has been highly extolled in the Vedas.

Now when after several mental repetitions of the *Pranava* the oscillation of the mind becomes less and less, the mind becomes more and more tranquil, till at length it reaches the blessed state if the process is steadily pursued. This cannot be done in a day. It requires a good struggle of many days to end all struggles. You should repeat the process daily to cultivate the habit of calmness against your acquired habit of random activity. In doing so you will find many difficulties, such as, carnal appetite, desire of fame, the fear of being useless to society, &c., all of which will try to deter you from your pursuit after truth, and detain you in the mirage of space and time. Wealth and women are the two principal attractions in this world of ours and they will not easily allow you to tear off the bond of your lifelong slavery to them. "He alone can hope to attain the blessed state who can look down upon the greed of wealth, and see in every woman the blessed image of his own mother" says Bhagavan Sri Rama-krishna. With a holy and meek heart devoid of all desires after carnal enjoyments, a man may aspire to break down the barrier which hides from his view the eternal mansion of truth. There is no other way left for him. The balloon tries to ascend the sky but finds it too difficult for its power to rend asunder the ropes which bind it to the earth. Untie the ropes, and the balloon merrily jumps and rises above the world. Such is *Yoganidhi*.

CALCUTTA.

A SANNYASIN.

PROSPECTUS.

SIR,

Under the advice and with the encouragement of Swami Vivekananda, it is proposed to start a weekly journal to be named the *Brahmavajin*. The main object of the journal is to propagate the principles of the Vedantic Religion of India and to work towards the improvement of the social and moral conditions of man by steadily holding aloft the sublime and universal ideal of Hinduism. The power of any ideal in filling human hearts with inspiration, and the love of the good and the beautiful, is dependent on how high and pure it is: and it shall be the endeavour of the *Brahmavajin* to portray the Hindu ideal in the best and truest light in which it is found recorded in the historical sacred literature of the Hindus. Mindful of the fact that, between the ideal of the Hindu Scriptures and the practical life of the Hindu peoples, there is a wide gulf of separation, the proposed new journal will constantly have in view how best to try to bridge that gulf and make the social and religious institutions of the country accord more and more with the spirit of that lofty divine ideal.

To preach the truth and proclaim the ideal is work that is always, and in itself, of great value. It is even more so in India where all social elevation and the improvement of human conduct have been invariably brought about by means of essentially

religious influences. Utilitarian considerations of convenience, and of justice based thereon, have never held sway over man's heart here to the same extent as faith in religion and its commandments. The New India of to-day is in many respects, far different from the Old India of centuries ago, and all our old institutions have to get themselves re-adjusted so as to be in consonance with the altered conditions of modern life. For this purpose it is highly necessary to see that the Hindu religion is more than ever earnestly engaged in the service of man in this ancient land of ours, wherein the sacred Light from above has shone always on suffering humanity, offering guidance and the consolation of immortal bliss. As Hinduism believes in the gradual evolution of human perfection and in the harmony of religions, the *Brahmavādin* shall have no quarrel with other religions, but shall always try to do its best to uphold the work of strengthening and enabling man, under the banner of whatsoever religion such work may be

accomplished. Truth is one and must be perfectly concordant, and the only thing that any religion has to hate is vice.

The undersigned, therefore, request to know, at your early convenience, whether this proposal meets with your approval, and whether you are willing to help it on in all the ways you can, to a successful issue. The annual subscription for the journal is Rs. 4, inclusive of postage; and it is under contemplation to bring out the first issue not later than the 1st of September next. All communications are to be addressed to the Manager of the *Brahmavādin*, Triplicane, Madras.

We beg to remain,

Sir,

Your most obedient servants,

G. VENKATARAMA ROW, M. A.

M. C. NANJENDA ROW, B. A., M. B. & C. M.

M. C. ALASINGAPURMAL, B. A.

When we are born again, our soul does not get annihilated; senseless men utter a falsehood when they say that such and such a person is dead. In fact that soul enters another body and death is simply another name for a change of body.—*Sāṅkhya Parva, Mahābhārata*.

A heart cleansed from lust, speech unpolluted by lies, and body kept clear of mischief, constitute the threefold furniture of divine worship.—*Prapanna Pārijāta*.

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